

WINGS OF GOLD

The Voice of Naval Aviation, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

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The Naval Aviation Enterprise: Supporting the Warfighter

The vision of the Naval Aviation Enterprise (NAE) is to deliver the right force, with the right readiness, at the right cost, at the right time . . . today, and in the future. To better understand the strategy for realizing this vision while supporting the Naval Aviation Warfighter, Wings of Gold asked Vice Adm. Jim Zortman, Commander, Naval Air Forces (CNAF) and the NAE's Chief Executive Officer, and Vice Adm. Wally Massenburg, Commander, Naval Air Systems Command and the NAE's Chief Operating Officer, questions regarding their revolutionary warfighting partnership.

WOG: Admiral Zortman, why is Naval Aviation going through such a large-scale transformation, and what specific historical event, contributed to it?

VADM Z: The entire Navy and Marine Corps, not just Naval Aviation, are transforming. We are learning to operate more effectively to produce current readiness, so that we can recapitalize our forces and afford our future. At the front of this transformation is the Naval Aviation Enterprise—a warfighting partnership, where interdependent issues affecting multiple commands are

resolved on an Enterprise-wide basis. The enterprise model for conducting Naval Aviation's warfighting business is working *today*, throughout the fleet.

Naval Aviation has always been willing to make significant changes based on lessons learned from honest self-evaluation. For example, Vietnam's aircraft/aircrew low kill ratio led to the creation of TOPGUN, the Navy Fighter Weapons School. In the early 1980s, issues identified in multi-air wing strikes

Flight Officer (NFO) shortfalls. We started a program called Naval Aviation Pilot Production Improvement (NAPPI) in 1998. NAPPI helped us understand and manage the interdependencies of manpower, training and equipment – three entities that had historically operated independently. What was once a disjointed, stovepiped process became coordinated and aligned, and the process became faster and more effective. We produced the equivalent of several hundred additional

pilots without spending any additional money. In each of these cases we developed a process to deliver what we needed . . . a more effective force. With NAPPI, Naval Aviation had the beginnings of an enterprise.

WOG: Admiral Massenburg, at about the same time NAPPI stood up, there were also significant challenges with Naval Aviation material readiness. Can you comment?

VADM M: In 1998, Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Adm. Clemens, commissioned a study called Aviation Maintenance Supply Readiness (AMSR). The AMSR study began identifying the root causes of gaps between readiness requirements and resources. It clearly demonstrated



VADM Jim Zortman, Commander Naval Air Forces, right, with VADM Walter Massenburg, Commander Naval Air Systems Command, left, at a Naval Aviation Enterprise conference.

in Lebanon highlighted the need for standardized Carrier Air Wing strike training, and led to the development of the Naval Strike and Air Warfare Center (NSAWC). In the late 1990s, problems in the aviator production and training pipeline led to pilot and Naval

that process improvement, based on quantifiable metrics and data collection, was critical to understanding the reasons behind the significant supply shortfalls that were hampering Naval Aviation readiness. But while AMSR ventilated the root causes, it still lacked a construct for implementation, so in 2001, the Naval Aviation Readiness Integrated Improvement Program (NAVRIIP) was created.

NAVRIIP was a huge step toward the enterprise concept, creating cross-functional teams that brought all the readiness players – maintenance, logistics, acquisition, and supply – together in a common forum, focused on the single fleet-driven metric of *aircraft ready for tasking*. With NAVRIIP, we reverse-engineered the readiness process by tying Ready-For-Tasking (RFT) aircraft entitlements to where each squadron was in its Inter-Deployment Readiness Cycle. NAVRIIP enabled us to connect the Warfighter’s RFT needs to planning, programming, and acquisition, which helped target our investments, and it became the foundation of what we know today as the Naval Aviation Enterprise.

WOG: Admiral Zortman, would you comment on what the NAE added to this process?

VADM Z: The right combat readiness is still the first and foremost output I’m looking for. While NAVRIIP helped us understand the business of readiness, we were producing readiness at *any* cost – not readiness at the *right* cost. So our single fleet-driven metric changed to *aircraft ready for tasking at reduced cost*. The same amount of readiness, but pay less for it. In most

cases the people who had big parts were not in the flow. With this new metric came the realization that many more stakeholders would now have to be involved. Resource sponsors, acquisition professionals, human capital, and facilities were now part of the equation, which dictated the creation of a larger, enterprise-wide concept. The NAE was formed to serve as a “warfighting partnership” to understand and control the many processes that drive Naval Aviation readiness and



Key figures in NAE: VADM Zortman, VADM Justin McCarthy (Director for Material Readiness and Logistics), CNO ADM Vern Clark and VADM Massenburg.

costs, and to focus stakeholder commands on our new cost-wise Fleet-driven metric. Like NAPPI and NAVRIIP, the NAE dismantles stovepipes, demands cross-functional communication, and provides Warfighters with the resources they need – efficiently and effectively. Working together as an enterprise harnesses change as a positive force within our Navy and Marine Corps team.

WOG: Is the fleet clear on the NAE’s purpose and structure?

VADM Z: There are some misconceptions that the NAE is only about cost cutting. It is about warfighting readiness *at the right cost*, and the institution of sweeping cultural changes – based on

measuring and holding ourselves accountable—that will achieve the right level of warfighting readiness for our fleet customers. To remain viable, an enterprise this large must perform effectively and efficiently, which means it must understand and be able to quantify the readiness it buys. We do this as an enterprise by developing the metrics to better manage and prioritize our resources, and in so doing, we better serve the fleet.

WOG: Admiral Massenburg, how is the NAE involved in Human Capital Strategy?

VADM M: The NAE has a Human Capital Strategy (HCS) Transition Team, which will eventually evolve into a full-fledged Cross Functional Team (CFT), much like NAVRIIP evolved into our Readiness CFT. The HCS Transition Team is working on shaping the workforce based on the demand signals we receive from the Fleet. Those signals drive the internal products and services we provide, the

processes and efficiencies we employ, the mix of skills, talent, and proficiency levels we need, and the recruiting and development strategies we implement as we shape, balance, and size our workforce, so that the right people are working on the right things at the right time.

WOG: Admiral Massenburg, what does the Warfighter get from the NAE?

VADM M: Put simply, we provide the Warfighter with *aircraft ready for tasking at reduced cost*, and we do that by implementing proven process efficiencies. Take aircraft maintenance, for example. Enterprise AIRSpeed, which is an enabler of NAVRIIP, aligns

Organizational-Level, Intermediate-Level, and Depot-Level supply replenishment and repair processes to the demands of the Fleet operator, enabling the effective and efficient preparation of the right number of cost-wise, Ready-for-Tasking (RFT) aircraft required to perform the mission. Depot AIRSpeed, now deployed across all three NAE depots, uses commercial best practices such as Lean, Theory of Constraints (TOC), and Six Sigma to reduce cycle time and improve productivity. Using these tools, Cherry Point reduced CH-46 turnaround time from 215 days to 170; Jacksonville reduced EA-6B re-wing turnaround time from 594 days to 450; and North Island reduced F/A-18 turnaround time from 192 days to 132. Additionally, the average Work-In-Progress (WIP) reduction was 37%. In this instance, the Enterprise model analyzed and improved the whole picture – from Organization-Level through Intermediate-Level to supply and acquisition – for the benefit of the Warfighter.

NAVAIR's warfighting business model focuses on four key metrics: inventory, cycle time, quality, and total cost. We use these metrics to measure how well we produce for the Warfighter – our end user and customer – and we are employing acquisition strategies that enable our partners to deliver needed, high-quality weapons systems to the Fleet while maximizing the value of Navy resources. The better we master our systems and processes, the better we serve the Warfighter.

WOG: Admiral Zortman, you've talked about the importance of both culture and structure in the NAE. What do you mean by that?

VADM Z: By culture, I mean the collective behavior of the NAE's leadership – their attitudes, goals, values, and practices. The Enterprise

construct lends structure to new behaviors that understand the need for, and are committed to, changing the way we conduct the business of warfighting, so that we maximize the use of our existing resources without mortgaging our future. There are seven NAE Core Stakeholders: myself and Vice Adm. Massenburg; the Deputy Commandant for Aviation at Headquarters Marine Corps; Commander, Naval Air Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet (CNAL); Chief of Naval Air Training (CNATRA); Director, Air Warfare Division (OPNAV N78); and Director, Fleet Readiness Division (OPNAV N43). In addition we have a board of directors who collectively represent over 20 commands impacting Naval Aviation, so I know the NAE has the right leadership in place to champion the enterprise crusade.

WOG: What challenges are ahead for the NAE?

VADM Z: The biggest challenge is to continue to support the Navy and Marine Corps in the Global War on Terror, Major Combat Operations (MCO), and Homeland Defense, while fulfilling our commitments to provide, maintain, and improve our Naval Air Force. We need to fully engage in the upcoming Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) and Base Realignment And Closure (BRAC) process so that we can make the right decisions from an enterprise-wide perspective. Internally, we will shoulder the challenges of managing our aging fleet of aircraft, shaping our Human Capital workforce, and pursuing innovative ways to reduce the cost of current readiness so that we can afford the Naval Aviation force of tomorrow.

WOG: What specific Warfighter challenges are on the horizon for NAE?

VADM Z: While the Navy has

achieved outstanding readiness performance from its carrier fleet, the cost of achieving that readiness can be improved. As such, we have created a Carrier Readiness Team (CRT) that uses the same principles we use now to understand the cost drivers affecting Naval Aviation's Type/Model/Series aircraft. The CRT's challenge is to define the right carrier readiness standard and align the Enterprise toward achieving that standard at reduced cost. I believe that the time is right for this important and defining readiness challenge, because it will ultimately dictate the future of our carrier fleet.

WOG: Any final thoughts, Admirals?

VADM M: We know that neither uniqueness nor complexity will guarantee our survival, and that we no longer can afford readiness at any cost. We also know that when we align stovepipes of activity under a *single process owner* who is focused on improving a *single, Fleet-driven, quantifiable readiness metric*, the Navy and Marine Corps achieve significant measurable improvement in readiness and efficiency. Our challenge then is to continue to find solutions using an Enterprise-wide approach – one that is driven by the *single Fleet-driven metric of aircraft ready for tasking at reduced cost*.

VADM Z: Our success as an organization requires teamwork, precision execution, and measurement – the same skills our Warfighters apply on the flight deck and in the cockpit. We must continue to innovate, embrace change and challenge convention, so that we can remain the world's foremost Naval Air Force.